

## ARGUMENTS/REMARKS

The Examiner has based the restriction requirement on the ground that the inventions listed as Groups I-III do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2 they lack the same or corresponding general technical features for the following reasons:

In Group I, claims 1-7 and 14-21, there is no special technical feature in view of Japanese Patent Application Publication No. JP6100842 to Kazu ("JP '842"). Likewise, the Examiner opines that in Group II, claims 8-11, 13, and 22-26 and Group III, including claims 12 and 27, there is no special technical feature in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,709,541 to Slone ("Slone").

Applicant respectfully traverses the restriction requirement because the cited patent documents, namely, JP '842 or Slone, do not negate the patentability of the present claims.

JP '842 discloses a pressure sensitive adhesive tape for the purpose of joining end portions of spaced-apart adjacent objects 9. Hence, at the outset, the technical object of the present invention to eliminate stress in thin semiconductor wafers is not at all present or suggested in JP '842. The tape defined in the present claims for sticking to an adherend such as a thin semiconductor wafer has a sticky surface and an opposed non-sticky surface. It would appear that the tape disclosed by JP '842 has a sticky surface 5 with an unidentified portion 3 which carries a pressure sensitive adhesive having a force weaker than the pressure sensitive layer 5. This object 3 is attached to a carrier 7. In the present invention, the tape is supported on its non-sticky side to a support film wherein the support film has a removable sticky surface which contacts the non-sticky surface of the tape. No such arrangement appears to be disclosed by JP '842, which includes the rather bulky structure 3 which is not identified in the English abstract of JP '842. This portion 3 remains attached to the adherend in JP '842 and would appear to present a sticky surface after removal from the carrier 7, which certainly is not present in the present claims.

With respect to Slone, Slone merely teaches an apparatus and method for the transfer of graphics to a signboard. It is certainly not seen how Slone would teach anything meaningful to persons skilled in the art with respect to sticking a protective

tape to a semiconductor wafer in the manufacture of semiconductors, circuits and the like. In addition, Slone teaches the manufacture of a sign having graphics transferred thereto wherein the signboard does not appear at all to be delicate and subject to fracture as is the case in the fixing of thin semiconductor wafers.

In light of the above, the Examiner's reconsideration and removal of the restriction requirement is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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